

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR RELIABLY CHOOSING A MASTER
NETWORK MANAGER DURING INITIALIZATION OF A NETWORK
COMPUTING SYSTEM**

CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present invention is related to applications entitled A System Area Network of End-to-End Context via Reliable Datagram Domains, serial no. _____, attorney docket no. AUS9-2000-0625-US1; Method and Apparatus for Pausing a Send Queue without Causing Sympathy Errors, serial no. _____, attorney docket no. AUS9-2000-0626-US1; Method and Apparatus to Perform Fabric Management, serial no. _____, attorney docket no. AUS9-2000-0627-US1; End Node Partitioning using LMC for a System Area Network, serial no. _____, attorney docket no. AUS9-2000-0628-US1; Method and Apparatus for Dynamic Retention of System Area Network Management Information in Non-Volatile Store, serial no. _____, attorney docket no. AUS9-2000-0629-US1; Method and Apparatus for Retaining Network Security Settings Across Power Cycles, serial no. _____, attorney docket no. AUS9-2000-0630-US1; Method and Apparatus for Reporting Unauthorized Attempts to Access Nodes in a Network Computing System, serial no. _____, attorney docket no. AUS9-2000-0631-US1; Method and Apparatus for Ensuring Scalable Mastership During Initialization of a System Area Network, serial no. _____, attorney docket no. AUS9-2000-0633-US1; and Method and Apparatus for Using a Service ID for the Equivalent of Port ID in a Network Computing System, serial no. _____, attorney docket

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

no. AUS9-2000-0634-US1, all of which are filed even date hereof, assigned to the same assignee, and incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field:

The present invention relates generally to an improved network computing system, and in particular to a method and apparatus for managing a network computing system. Still more particularly, the present invention provides a method and apparatus for selecting a master network manager in a network computing system.

2. Description of Related Art:

In a System Area Network (SAN), the hardware provides a message passing mechanism which can be used for Input/Output devices (I/O) and interprocess communications between general computing nodes (IPC). Processes executing on devices access SAN message passing hardware by posting send/receive messages to send/receive work queues on a SAN channel adapter (CA). These processes also are referred to as "consumers". The send/receive work queues (WQ) are assigned to a consumer as a queue pair (QP). The messages can be sent over five different transport types: Reliable Connected (RC), Reliable datagram (RD), Unreliable Connected (UC), Unreliable Datagram (UD), and Raw Datagram (RawD). Consumers retrieve the results of these messages from a completion queue (CQ) through SAN send and receive work completions (WC). The source channel adapter takes care

00692346 "101900

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

of segmenting outbound messages and sending them to the destination. The destination channel adapter takes care of reassembling inbound messages and placing them in the memory space designated by the destination's consumer. Two channel adapter types are present, a host channel adapter (HCA) and a target channel adapter (TCA). The host channel adapter is used by general purpose computing nodes to access the SAN fabric. Consumers use SAN verbs to access host channel adapter functions. The software that interprets verbs and directly accesses the channel adapter is known as the channel interface (CI).

These consumers are located on nodes within the SAN. A SAN may contain hundreds or thousands of nodes depending on the particular configuration. In managing a SAN, one or more nodes may be selected to function as a master, which is responsible for configuring and managing the SAN. Redundancies and efficient selection of a master is desirable within a SAN. Therefore, it would be advantageous to have an improved method and apparatus for selecting a master.

09692346-101900

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a method in a node within network computing system for selecting a master network manager, wherein the first node is associated with a first priority. Requests are sent to the network computing system to discover other nodes within the network computing system. A second priority from the request is identified in response to receiving a response to one of the requests from another node within the network computing system. The first node shifts to a standby mode if it discovers a master subnet manager or the second priority is higher than the first priority. The first node shifts to a master mode if a response containing a priority higher than the first priority is absent in responses received by the first node and the first node has completed checking all other nodes in the network computing system. In the case where the priority received is equal, the comparison is further made on the globally unique identifier which is received from the same node, in which case the node with the lowest globally unique identifier wins the arbitration.

00692346 "101900

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a diagram of a network computing system is illustrated in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a functional block diagram of a host processor node in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a diagram of a host channel adapter in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a diagram illustrating processing of work requests in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 5 is an illustration of a data packet in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a diagram illustrating a system area network (SAN) management model in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 7 is a diagram illustrating relations between subnet managers and subnet manager agents in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and

0062346-101900

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

Figure 8 is a state machine diagram for initializing a subnet manager in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention provides a network computing system having end nodes, switches, routers, and links interconnecting these components. Each end node uses send and receive queue pairs to transmit and receives messages. The end nodes segment the message into packets and transmit the packets over the links. The switches and routers interconnects the end nodes and route the packets to the appropriate end node. The end nodes reassemble the packets into a message at the destination.

With reference now to the figures and in particular with reference to **Figure 1**, a diagram of a network computing system is illustrated in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The network computing system represented in **Figure 1** takes the form of a system area network (SAN) **100** and is provided merely for illustrative purposes, and the embodiments of the present invention described below can be implemented on computer systems of numerous other types and configurations. For example, computer systems implementing the present invention can range from a small server with one processor and a few input/output (I/O) adapters to massively parallel supercomputer systems with hundreds or thousands of processors and thousands of I/O adapters. Furthermore, the present invention can be implemented in an infrastructure of remote computer systems connected by an internet or intranet.

SAN **100** is a high-bandwidth, low-latency network interconnecting nodes within the network computing system. A node is any component attached to one or more

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

links of a network. In the depicted example, SAN 100 includes nodes in the form of host processor node 102, host processor node 104, redundant array independent disk (RAID) subsystem node 106, switch node 112, switch node 114, router node 117, and I/O chassis node 108. The nodes illustrated in **Figure 1** are for illustrative purposes only, as SAN 100 can connect any number and any type of independent processor nodes and I/O adapter nodes. Any one of the nodes can function as an end node, which is herein defined to be a device that originates or finally consumes messages or frames in SAN 100.

In one embodiment of the present invention, an error handling mechanism in distributed computer systems is present in which the error handling mechanism allows for reliable connection or reliable datagram communication between end nodes in network computing system, such as SAN 100.

A message, as used herein, is an application-defined unit of data exchange, which is a primitive unit of communication between cooperating processes. A packet is one unit of data encapsulated by a networking protocol headers and/or trailer. The headers generally provide control and routing information for directing the frame through SAN. The trailer generally contains control and cyclic redundancy check (CRC) data for ensuring packets are not delivered with corrupted contents.

SAN 100 contains the communications and management infrastructure supporting both I/O and interprocessor communications (IPC) within a network computing system. The SAN 100 shown in **Figure 1** includes a switched communications fabric, which allows many devices to

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

concurrently transfer data with high-bandwidth and low latency in a secure, remotely managed environment. End nodes can communicate over multiple ports and utilize multiple paths through the SAN fabric. The multiple ports and paths through the SAN shown in **Figure 1** can be employed for fault tolerance and increased bandwidth data transfers.

The SAN **100** in **Figure 1** includes switch **112**, switch **114**, switch **146**, and router **117**. A switch is a device that connects multiple links together and allows routing of packets from one link to another link within a subnet using a small header destination local identifier (DLID) field. A router is a device that connects multiple subnets together and is capable of routing frames from one link in a first subnet to another link in a second subnet using a large header destination globally unique identifier (DGUID).

In one embodiment, a link is a full duplex channel between any two network fabric elements, such as end nodes, switches, or routers. Example suitable links include, but are not limited to, copper cables, optical cables, and printed circuit copper traces on backplanes and printed circuit boards.

For reliable service types, end nodes, such as host processor end nodes and I/O adapter end nodes, generate request packets and return acknowledgment packets. Switches and routers pass packets along, from the source to the destination. Except for the variant CRC trailer field which is updated at each stage in the network, switches pass the packets along unmodified. Routers update the variant CRC trailer field and modify other

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

fields in the header as the packet is routed.

In SAN 100 as illustrated in **Figure 1**, host processor node 102, host processor node 104, RAID I/O subsystem 106 and I/O chassis 108 include at least one channel adapter (CA) to interface to SAN 100. In one embodiment, each channel adapter is an endpoint that implements the channel adapter interface in sufficient detail to source or sink packets transmitted on SAN fabric 100. Host processor node 102 contains channel adapters in the form of host channel adapter 118 and host channel adapter 120. Host processor node 104 contains host channel adapter 122 and host channel adapter 124. Host processor node 102 also includes central processing units 126-130 and a memory 132 interconnected by bus system 134. Host processor node 104 similarly includes central processing units 136-140 and a memory 142 interconnected by a bus system 144.

Host channel adapters 118 and 120 provide a connection to switch 112 while host channel adapters 122 and 124 provide a connection to switches 112 and 114.

In one embodiment, a host channel adapter is implemented in hardware. In this implementation, the host channel adapter hardware offloads much of central processing unit and I/O adapter communication overhead. This hardware implementation of the host channel adapter also permits multiple concurrent communications over a switched network without the traditional overhead associated with communicating protocols. In one embodiment, the host channel adapters and SAN 100 in **Figure 1** provide the I/O and interprocessor

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

communications (IPC) consumers of the network computing system with zero processor-copy data transfers without involving the operating system kernel process, and employs hardware to provide reliable, fault tolerant communications.

As indicated in **Figure 1**, router **117** is coupled to wide area network (WAN) and/or local area network (LAN) connections to other hosts or other routers.

The I/O chassis **108** in **Figure 1** includes a switch **146** and multiple I/O modules **148-156**. In these examples, the I/O modules take the form of adapter cards. Example adapter cards illustrated in **Figure 1** include a SCSI adapter card for I/O module **148**; an adapter card to fiber channel hub and fiber channel-arbitrated loop (FC-AL) devices for I/O module **152**; an ethernet adapter card for I/O module **150**; a graphics adapter card for I/O module **154**; and a video adapter card for I/O module **156**. Any known type of adapter card can be implemented. I/O adapters also include a switch in the I/O adapter backplane to couple the adapter cards to the SAN fabric. These modules contain target channel adapters **158-166**.

In this example, RAID subsystem node **106** in **Figure 1** includes a processor **168**, a memory **170**, a target channel adapter (TCA) **172**, and multiple redundant and/or striped storage disk unit **174**. Target channel adapter **172** can be a fully functional host channel adapter.

SAN **100** handles data communications for I/O and interprocessor communications. SAN **100** supports high-bandwidth and scalability required for I/O and also supports the extremely low latency and low CPU overhead

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

required for interprocessor communications. User clients can bypass the operating system kernel process and directly access network communication hardware, such as host channel adapters, which enable efficient message passing protocols. SAN **100** is suited to current computing models and is a building block for new forms of I/O and computer cluster communication. Further, SAN **100** in **Figure 1** allows I/O adapter nodes to communicate among themselves or communicate with any or all of the processor nodes in network computing system. With an I/O adapter attached to the SAN **100**, the resulting I/O adapter node has substantially the same communication capability as any host processor node in SAN **100**.

Turning next to **Figure 2**, a functional block diagram of a host processor node is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Host processor node **200** is an example of a host processor node, such as host processor node **102** in **Figure 1**. In this example, host processor node **200**, shown in **Figure 2**, includes a set of consumers **202-208**, which are processes executing on host processor node **200**. Host processor node **200** also includes channel adapter **210** and channel adapter **212**. Channel adapter **210** contains ports **214** and **216** while channel adapter **212** contains ports **218** and **220**. Each port connects to a link. The ports can connect to one SAN subnet or multiple SAN subnets, such as SAN **100** in **Figure 1**. In these examples, the channel adapters take the form of host channel adapters.

Consumers **202-208** transfer messages to the SAN via the verbs interface **222** and message and data service **224**.

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

A verbs interface is essentially an abstract description of the functionality of a host channel adapter. An operating system may expose some or all of the verb functionality through its programming interface. Basically, this interface defines the behavior of the host. Additionally, host processor node **200** includes a message and data service **224**, which is a higher level interface than the verb layer and is used to process messages and data received through channel adapter **210** and channel adapter **212**. With reference now to **Figure 3**, a diagram of a host channel adapter is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Host channel adapter **300** shown in **Figure 3** includes a set of queue pairs (QPs) **302-310**, which are used to transfer messages to the host channel adapter ports **312-316**. Buffering of data to host channel adapter ports **312-316** is channeled through virtual lanes (VL) **318-334** where each VL has its own flow control. Subnet manager configures channel adapters with the local addresses for each physical port, i.e., the port's LID. Subnet manager agent (SMA) **336** is the entity that communicates with the subnet manager for the purpose of configuring the channel adapter. Memory translation and protection (MTP) **338** is a mechanism that translates virtual addresses to physical addresses and to validate access rights. Direct memory access (DMA) **340** provides for direct memory access operations using memory **340** with respect to queue pairs **302-310**.

A single channel adapter, such as the host channel adapter **300** shown in **Figure 3**, can support thousands of

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

queue pairs. By contrast, a target channel adapter in an I/O adapter typically supports a much smaller number of queue pairs.

Each queue pair consists of a send work queue (SWQ) and a receive work queue. The send work queue is used to send channel and memory semantic messages. The receive work queue receives channel semantic messages. A consumer calls an operating-system specific programming interface, which is herein referred to as verbs, to place work requests (WRs) onto a work queue.

With reference now to **Figure 4**, a diagram illustrating processing of work requests is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In **Figure 4**, a receive work queue **400**, send work queue **402**, and completion queue **404** are present for processing requests from and for consumer **406**. These requests from consumer **402** are eventually sent to hardware **408**. In this example, consumer **406** generates work requests **410** and **412** and receives work completion **414**. As shown in **Figure 4**, work requests placed onto a work queue are referred to as work queue elements (WQEs).

Send work queue **402** contains work queue elements (WQEs) **422-428**, describing data to be transmitted on the SAN fabric. Receive work queue **400** contains work queue elements (WQEs) **416-420**, describing where to place incoming channel semantic data from the SAN fabric. A work queue element is processed by hardware **408** in the host channel adapter.

The verbs also provide a mechanism for retrieving completed work from completion queue **404**. As shown in

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

Figure 4, completion queue **404** contains completion queue elements (CQEs) **430-436**. Completion queue elements contain information about previously completed work queue elements. Completion queue **404** is used to create a single point of completion notification for multiple queue pairs. A completion queue element is a data structure on a completion queue. This element describes a completed work queue element. The completion queue element contains sufficient information to determine the queue pair and specific work queue element that completed. A completion queue context is a block of information that contains pointers to, length, and other information needed to manage the individual completion queues.

Example work requests supported for the send work queue **402** shown in **Figure 4** are as follows. A send work request is a channel semantic operation to push a set of local data segments to the data segments referenced by a remote node's receive work queue element. For example, work queue element **428** contains references to data segment 4 **438**, data segment 5 **440**, and data segment 6 **442**. Each of the send work request's data segments contains a virtually contiguous memory region. The virtual addresses used to reference the local data segments are in the address context of the process that created the local queue pair.

A remote direct memory access (RDMA) read work request provides a memory semantic operation to read a virtually contiguous memory space on a remote node. A memory space can either be a portion of a memory region or portion of a memory window. A memory region references a previously registered set of virtually

09692346-101900

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

contiguous memory addresses defined by a virtual address and length. A memory window references a set of virtually contiguous memory addresses which have been bound to a previously registered region.

The RDMA Read work request reads a virtually contiguous memory space on a remote end node and writes the data to a virtually contiguous local memory space. Similar to the send work request, virtual addresses used by the RDMA Read work queue element to reference the local data segments are in the address context of the process that created the local queue pair. For example, work queue element **416** in receive work queue **400** references data segment 1 **444**, data segment 2 **446**, and data segment **448**. The remote virtual addresses are in the address context of the process owning the remote queue pair targeted by the RDMA Read work queue element.

A RDMA Write work queue element provides a memory semantic operation to write a virtually contiguous memory space on a remote node. The RDMA Write work queue element contains a scatter list of local virtually contiguous memory spaces and the virtual address of the remote memory space into which the local memory spaces are written.

A RDMA FetchOp work queue element provides a memory semantic operation to perform an atomic operation on a remote word. The RDMA FetchOp work queue element is a combined RDMA Read, Modify, and RDMA Write operation. The RDMA FetchOp work queue element can support several read-modify-write operations, such as Compare and Swap if equal.

A bind (unbind) remote access key (R_Key) work queue

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element provides a command to the host channel adapter hardware to modify (destroy) a memory window by associating (disassociating) the memory window to a memory region. The R_Key is part of each RDMA access and is used to validate that the remote process has permitted access to the buffer.

For interprocessor communications, a user-mode software process transfers data through queue pairs directly from where the buffer resides in memory. In one embodiment, the transfer through the queue pairs bypasses the operating system and consumes few host instruction cycles. Queue pairs permit zero processor-copy data transfer with no operating system kernel involvement. The zero processor-copy data transfer provides for efficient support of high-bandwidth and low-latency communication.

When a queue pair is created, the queue pair is set to provide a selected type of transport service. In one embodiment, a network computing system implementing the present invention supports four types of transport

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

services.

Reliable and unreliable connected services associate a local queue pair with one and only one remote queue pair. Connected services require a process to create a queue pair for each process which is to communicate with over the SAN fabric. Thus, if each of N host processor nodes contain P processes, and all P processes on each node wish to communicate with all the processes on all the other nodes, each host processor node requires $P^2 \times (N - 1)$ queue pairs. Moreover, a process can connect a queue pair to another queue pair on the same host channel adapter.

Reliable datagram service associates a local end-end (EE) context with one and only one remote end-end context. The reliable datagram service permits a client process of one queue pair to communicate with any other queue pair on any other remote node. At a receive work queue, the reliable datagram service permits incoming messages from any send work queue on any other remote node. The reliable datagram service greatly improves scalability because the reliable datagram service is connectionless. Therefore, an end node with a fixed number of queue pairs can communicate with far more processes and end nodes with a reliable datagram service than with a reliable connection transport service. For example, if each of N host processor nodes contain P processes, and all P processes on each node wish to communicate with all the processes on all the other nodes, the reliable connection service requires $P^2 \times (N - 1)$ queue pairs on each node. By comparison, the connectionless reliable datagram service only requires P

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

queue pairs + (N -1) EE contexts on each node for exactly the same communications.

The unreliable datagram service is connectionless. The unreliable datagram service is employed by management applications to discover and integrate new switches, routers, and end nodes into a given network computing system. The unreliable datagram service does not provide the reliability guarantees of the reliable connection service and the reliable datagram service. The unreliable datagram service accordingly operates with less state information maintained at each end node.

SAN architecture management facilities provide for a subnet manager (SM) and an infrastructure that supports a number of general management services. The management infrastructure requires a subnet management agent (SMA) in each node and defines a general service interface that allows additional general services agents.

The SAN architecture defines a common management datagram (MAD) message structure for communicating between managers and management agents. The subnet manager is an entity attached to a subnet that is responsible for configuring and managing switches, routers, and channel adapters. The subnet manager can be implemented with other devices, such as a channel adapter or a switch.

Turning next to **Figure 5**, an illustration of a data packet is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

In data packet **500**, message data **502** contains data segment 1 **504**, data segment 2 **506**, and data segment 3 **508**, which are similar to the data segments illustrated

00692346-101900

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

in **Figure 4**. In this example, these data segments form a packet **510**, which is placed into packet payload **512** within data packet **500**. In these examples, the message segments used for subnet management contain an **M_Key**. The **M_Key** is used by the end node which is receiving the packet to determine if the subnet manager sending the packet has access to the subnet manager agent in the node. Additionally, data packet **500** contains CRC **514**, which is used for error checking. Additionally, routing header **516** and transport **518** are present in data packet **500**. Routing header **516** is used to identify source and destination ports for data packet **500**. Transport header **518** in this example specifies the destination queue pair for data packet **500**.

Additionally, transport header **518** also provides information such as the operation code, packet sequence number, and partition for data packet **500**. The operating code identifies whether the packet is the first, last, intermediate, or only packet of a message. The operation code also specifies whether the operation is a send RDMA write, read, or atomic. The packet sequence number is initialized when communications is established and increments each time a queue pair creates a new packet. Ports of an end node may be configured to be members of one or more possibly overlapping sets called partitions.

SAN architecture management facilities provide for a subnet manager and an infrastructure that supports a number of general management services. The management infrastructure requires a subnet management agent in each node and defines a general service interface that allows additional general services agents. The SAN architecture

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includes a common management datagram (MAD) message structure for communicating between managers and management agents.

Each node provides a subnet manager agent that the subnet manager accesses through a well known interface called the subnet management interface (SMI). Subnet manager interface allows for both LID routed packets and directed routed packets. Directed routing provides the means to communicate before switches and end nodes are configured.

SAN subnet management packets (SMPs) use an management key (M_Key) as an access control mechanism. When the subnet manager takes management control of a node, the subnet manager pushes its M_Key, along with a M_Key lease period, into each SAN component. The SAN component uses this M_Key to validate all future subnet management packets it receives within the M_Key lease

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

period. Subsequent subnet management packets (SMPs) have their M_Key field compared with the value previously stored by subnet manager in the SAN component. If a M_Key field in a subnet management packet matches the M_Key value stored in the SAN component, the packet is accepted. Otherwise the packet is discarded.

The SAN architecture supports the notion of multiple subnet managers per subnet and specifies how multiple subnet managers negotiate for one to become the master subnet manager. Once a subnet manager gains control of a subnet, it can retain control as long as it does not lose its M_Key in the components of the subnet. Loss of the M_Key can happen under several circumstances. This loss can happen through a power cycle of the component which contains the M_Key, with the component coming up with the default M_Key when the power to the component is restored. This loss also may happen through a boot of the node which contains the subnet manager, such that the subnet manager goes away and the M_Key lease period expires in the component, in which case another subnet manager can take over control of the component.

The SAN architecture, in these examples, also supports the notion of a SM_Key. The SM_Key provides a additional level of authentication authority to control which subnet manager is allowed to be the master subnet manager. This also provides another level of granularity in determining which subnet managers are trusted is establishing standby subnet managers, that can backup the master subnet manager for redundancy and handoff.

When a SAN network is initializing, a priority scheme determines which of the potential subnet managers

005101-142550

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

has the highest priority and therefore actually becomes the master subnet manager over the subnet. However, the lower-priority subnet managers must poll the master to ensure that they will be able to take over if it fails during initialization, or if parameters are changed after the initialization process. In large systems, hundreds or thousands of nodes may be present. These complex systems typically include redundancies, including backup subnet managers, which may take over when the primary subnet manager fails. During initialization, multiple subnet managers are available until one is chosen as the master subnet manager.

The present invention provides a method, apparatus, and computer implemented instructions for supporting the multiple subnet managers in a subnet and specify how multiple subnet managers negotiate for one to become the master subnet manager. During the SAN fabric configuration process at initial bring-up time, the subnet managers scan the network in order to discover the components that are connected to the network. If the subnet managers find a component that contains another subnet manager, then the subnet managers negotiate based on a previously setup priority. In the depicted examples, if the priorities are the same, then the winner of the arbitration process is the one with the lowest globally unique identification (GUID). The GUID is unique across the network, and therefore there can only be one winner of the arbitration among all the possible subnet managers in the network. Defining this master subnet manager negotiation precisely is important in order to assure interoperability of subnet managers from

005707 "94E26960

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

different manufacturers.

Turning next to **Figure 6**, a diagram illustrating a system area network (SAN) management model is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In **Figure 6**, the management of subnet **600** and SAN components like host processor node **602**, end nodes **604-610**, switches **612-616**, and router **618** use two management services: subnet manager **620** and subnet administration **622**. These two components are located in host node **602** in this example. A host node is a node that contains a host channel adapter and an end node is any node which is not a switch or a router. Subnet manager packets are used to discover, initialize, configure, and maintain SAN components through the management agent **624** in end node **610**. In this example, end node **610** includes a controller **626**, controller **628**, sensor **630**, light emitting diode (LED) **632**, and Vital Product Data (VPD) **634**.

SAN subnet management packets are used by the subnet manager to query and update subnet management data. Control of some aspects of the subnet management are through a user management console **636** in a host processor node **602**. Additionally, higher level management applications **638** may be used in place of or in conjunction with management console **636** to manage and configure subnet **600**.

Turning next to **Figure 7**, a diagram illustrating relations between subnet managers and subnet manager agents is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. In this example,

0060707 6426960

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

subnet manager agents include end nodes **702-710** and switches **712-716**. End nodes **702-710** include ports **718-736**. Subnet **700** can have multiple subnet managers. In this example, subnet manager **738** and subnet manager **740** are used to configure and control subnet **700**.

Subnet managers, such as subnet manager **738** and subnet manager **740**, send SAN subnet management packets containing a management key (M_Key) as an access control mechanism. When a subnet manager takes management control of a component, such as end node **702** or switch **712**, the subnet manager pushes its M_Key, along with a M_Key lease period, into the component. When the M_Key protection bits are appropriately set in the component, the component uses this M_Key to validate all future subnet management packets it receives within the M_Key lease period. Subsequent subnet management packets (SMPs) have their M_Key field compared with the value previously stored by the subnet manager on the component. If a subnet management packet has a M_Key field that matches the M_Key value stored in the SAN component, the packet is accepted. Otherwise, the packet is discarded.

Turning next to **Figure 8**, a state machine diagram for initializing a subnet manager is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

When state machine **800** for the subnet manager starts, state machine **800** enters the discovering state **S1**. Discovering state **S1** is used during initialization of the subnet manager to discover devices on the subnet. In this state, the subnet manager uses subnet management

00692346-101900

packets to query ports that the subnet manager has access to. These packets are sent to all other nodes to gather information, including path delays of the subnet, concerning switches and end ports. In addition, this state also is used to discover whether there is already a master subnet manager on the network and to discover other subnet managers on the subnet, determine which potential subnet manager is to become the master subnet manager. The subnet manager sends messages, such as SubnGet(NodeInfo), SubnGet(PortInfo), and SubnGet(SMInfo) to obtain information about nodes, ports, and subnet managers.

If a subnet manager having a higher priority is detected or a master subnet manager is detected, then state machine **800** shifts to a standby state **S2**. In standby state **S2**, the subnet manager may be placed into non-active state **S3** by a master subnet manager. A subnet manager in standby state **S2** periodically sends requests to the subnet manager in the master state and waits for a response to the request. This process is also referred to as polling. Calculation of the expected response

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

time for the polling operation is beyond the scope of this invention. If the master subnet manager does not respond within the defined time out or after a predetermined number of retries, or if the current subnet master has not indicated its master SMLID, a state change occurs in which state machine **800** transitions from standby state **S2** back to discovering state **S1** to begin the discovery process again for selecting another master subnet manager.

If the master subnet manager responds to the poll, then state machine **800** remains in standby state **S2**. While in standby state **S2**, the subnet manager may receive a discover subnet manager packet from the master subnet manager requesting that it transition into discovering state **S1**. This is useful when a master subnet manager decides to relinquish its mastership and it wants a particular standby manager, for example the one with highest priority. This relinquishment will allow a head start in the discovery process, and thus, expedite the rediscovery process and minimize the potential disruption caused by changing the mastership.

In this example, a disable message from a master subnet manager causes the shift from standby state **S2** to non-active state **S3**. Subnet managers in a non-active state do not participate in a polling scheme between the master subnet manager and other subnet managers in a standby state, such as standby state **S2**. State machine **800** may shift back into standby state **S2** from non-active state **S3** by receiving a standby message from a master subnet manager. A typical use of shifting a standby subnet manager into the not-active state **S3** is when a

006707 94E26950

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

master subnet manager determines that there are too many active standby managers.

In discovering state **S1**, state machine **800** shifts into master state **S4** if the subnet manager discovers that it has the highest priority and its discovery process is complete. While in the master state **S4**, the master subnet manager configures the subnet unless the subnet is already configured. Further, in this state the subnet is periodically monitored for changes in configuration. If a change in configuration is detected, the master subnet manager sends request packets to the appropriate ports to determine the specifics of the reconfiguration. If in master state **S4**, one or more subnet managers are discovered having a higher priority, a handover subnet management packet may be sent to the master subnet manager having the highest priority. In response to receiving an acknowledge packet, state machine **800** shifts from master state **S4** to standby state **S2**. In master state **S4**, if the subnet manager receives a handover subnet management packet from the lower priority subnet manager, this event does not cause a state transition out of master state **S4**.

State machine **800** also may shift into master state **S4** from standby state **S2** if a handover subnet management packet is received from a master subnet manager. This handover packet is received when the master subnet manager hands over mastership of the subnet to the standby subnet manager. This situation may occur due to a reconfiguration of the SAN which causes the current master subnet manager to discover that there exists a subnet manager in the standby state **S2** which has a higher

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Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

priority. State machine 800 will stay in master state S4 in response to events such as a poll message from another subnet manager or a topology change. Further, a handover message also will cause state machine 800 to remain in master state S4. The handover occurs as explained with respect to the shift of state machine 800 from state S4, to state S2. In this case, a handover would be an error. As a result, no state transition occurs.

Thus, the present invention provides a method, apparatus, and computer implemented instructions for negotiating mastership of a subnet for multiple subnet managers. Additionally, the mechanism provides a fail-over system to select a backup subnet manager in the event that the master subnet manager fails.

It is important to note that while the present invention has been described in the context of a fully functioning data processing system, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the processes of the present invention are capable of being distributed in the form of a computer readable medium of instructions and a variety of forms and that the present invention applies equally regardless of the particular type of signal bearing media actually used to carry out the distribution. Examples of computer readable media include recordable-type media, such as a floppy disk, a hard disk drive, a RAM, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, and transmission-type media, such as digital and analog communications links, wired or wireless communications links using transmission forms, such as, for example, radio frequency and light wave transmissions. The computer readable media may take the form of coded

00692346-101900

Docket No. AUS9-2000-0632-US1

formats that are decoded for actual use in a particular data processing system.

The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

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